

THE



SAY.

"BE THOU THE FIRST, OUR EFFORTS TO BEFRIEND,—HIS PRAISE IS LOST, WHO STAYS 'TILL ALL COMMEND."

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 1804.

A M U S I N G.

THE FORTUNE-TELLER,

In a Letter to a Country Gentleman.

SIR,

WAS lately upon a visit, while my own house was repairing, at a friend's in the country, who has a son and two very pretty daughters, all marriageable, but all unmarried. His wife is also a woman of elegance and beauty, though it is beauty in its farewell appearances. I had not been twenty minutes arrived at the house, before I found that the whole family, from the master to the maid-servant, were, according to the common but emphatic phrase, eaten up with *superstition*: the good folks described by the spectator are nothing to them. I came into the house at tea-time. "I wish we had some tea," (said the mother of the family) "at we might see what *destiny* means to do with us now." "Yes, mamma, (replied one of her daughters) but if Susan tells me as much news as she told me *last night*, I shall be ready to hang myself." "Nay, but, child, (said the father) she must tell you *what she sees*, and she cannot make the waves lie as she thinks proper; fate, my dear, *fate* and fortune cannot be resisted." "Can't they, father? (rejoined the young lady.) Then fate and fortune are as cross to my grandmother, that's all I know about the matter."

As I observed the family wished to get things over as fast as possible, I was determined not to delay them on *my* part; and therefore poured my tea with a trembling hand into my saucer, gave it a whiff or two with my breath, and swallowed it off, smothering hot to shew my politeness: I carried this civility, indeed, as far as any visitor ever need to do; for I not only scalded my mouth and throat until they were both handsomely blistered, but I forebore to eat any bread and butter, lest I should get choked for my complaisance, and I laid the spoon across my cup after the second dish, which I drank long before the sugar was dissolved.

This dispatch soon brought on the expected crisis, and the son rang the bell.—The eyes of the family were darted impatiently around, and the big look of expecta-

tion sat upon every feature. To confess the truth, I began to entertain some doubts as to the sanity of their intellectuals, and apprehended there might be an hereditary touch in the blood of the family. I was soon relieved, if it is any relief to see people play the fool, without having the apology of lunacy for it. Up came Mrs. Susan, who was at once a servant and a soothsayer. She really had a sort of fortune-telling face; a keen black eye that appeared to penetrate, a set of meditating muscles, a brow that projected, and a nose, that, figuratively speaking, *looked forwards*: add to this, her complexion was olive as that of an Egyptian, and the lines of thinking, though perhaps she never thought at all, were to be seen near her eye-brows. This long-sighted lady, who could see so vastly well in the dark, came glowing with all the graces of the kitchen, and, wiping her face with a corner of an apron very unlikely to clean it, she advanced to the table. Awful moment! Alarming preparation! She looked at the tea-pot, and desired every body to begin.

No sooner was this order given, than the family began to pour away, and toss the tea-leaves, after which they turned down the cups, and left them to the discretion of the sorceress Susan. She opened the business of the afternoon with the fortunes of the master, that were depicted in hieroglyphics within the cup. After turning it round several times, and looking as if she really saw the events and circumstances developed, she began to shew off.

"Here is a little trouble, sir, (said she) at the bottom of your cup, which is not cast so clear as I could wish. There is a disappointment concerning the receipt of money."

"As sure as I am alive, (said Sir Credulous) she means the cash I expect from the country—Heigho!—Well go on, Susan, go on."

"There's a letter coming, sir, to the house, and it will bring news of a death, and you will get a present by that death," says Mrs. Susan.

"Fifty to one (quoth Sir Credulous) but Sir Solomon, my uncle, is now upon his death-bed—I heard he was in a poor way last week, you know, Susan."

"I don't know for that, sir, (replies Susan) but there is a coffin in your cup as plain as a pike-staff; and there's a little vexation, but you'll get over it soon; and there is a marriage going to be in the family, and I can see the ring this minute—Look 'e here, sir."

"*I'fackins*, and so there is, (said the credulous knight, looking at the cup.—This is my Betsey and Mr. Danvers, I'd lay my life on't. Well, Susan, now tell my wife's."

Susan proceeded to inspect a second cup, and soon acquainted her mistress that company was coming to the house, and that she would go a long journey.

"Only think of that, (said Sir Credulous) —She means the rout you are to have on Christmas Eve, and your visit into Wales as soon as the spring rises.—Why, Susan, we shall burn you for a witch."

The Oracle now examined the remainder of the cups, in every one of which she saw something that *had* happened, or something that from her knowledge of the family-circumstances might possibly come to pass. Yet, when this sagacious person observed that there *would* be any thing that she had heard from their own mouths *was* to be, they paid innumerable compliments to her sagacity; and, in the course of a little time, when their own premeditated schemes were put into execution, they would cry out, that every thing Susan foretells was sure to happen.

While these sacred employments were on foot, I remained only a spectator, silently astonished; but when Susan departed I ventured to remark, that their servant seemed to be a knowing woman, and that it was plain she had dealing with more persons than were good.

"Heaven only knows, (said the old lady, very gravely) who helps her, but she knows every thing; and, for my part, has told me such matters, not only of what is *to come*, but of what has been *long* and *long* before she came into the family, that the very flesh has sometimes crept upon my bones, my hair has lifted itself by the force of an amazement upon my head, and I have at such times looked at her, until I verily thought the devil himself was at her elbow."

All things were now quiet until after supper-time, when cards were proposed—not to play at any game with, but to tell fortunes, which, it seems, was constantly the custom of the family before they went to rest.

Susan, therefore, made her second appearance, and spread the cards to her purpose. She began, as before, with Sir Credulous, and ended with the youngest daughter. More than two hours were misemployed in this mysterious manner, in the course of which time, all the cant and tricks of those who trade in these petty impositions, were diversely exhibited.

And yet the daily repetition of this palpable nonsense, so far from cloying, only whetted, and gave, as it were, a new edge to Sir Credulous and all his train. Among a thousand other absurd things that I forget, I remember what follows of Mrs. Susan's predictions, from the situations into which either accident or her contrivance had thrown the cards. She told Sir Credulous, that there was a great deal of sickness over his head, and that he would have words with a black man upon account of a black woman.—She informed Lady Credulous, that the very journey and company, which were before in the tea-leaves, were now upon the cards.—The eldest daughter was acquainted, that she would receive a letter, and with it a present; and that present would be the forerunner of a ring; and that ring would be put upon her finger by a fair man, with a very good heart, which he bore towards her.—She told the youngest daughter, not only what she *did* expect, but what she did *not* expect—what was coming to the house, and what was going from it;—she saw plainly in the cards, that she, (the young lady) was to be married; that she was to have two children, and then marry again; that there was a deal of trouble, but that she would get a great deal by a death; and there were two men and a woman, the one black, the other fair, at that moment talking about her; but that as there was a good heart for her, she would turn her back on all her troubles, and ride in her coach."

The girl's exultation at the circumstance of the *coach* is not to be described, and she went in high spirits into her bed-chamber; previous to which, however, there was a pleasant altercation amongst all parties in regard to their different prospects. The whole family were exceedingly disposed to quarrel with *destiny*; and not being able to lay hands on *that*, they drove her handmaid, Mrs. Susan, in a rage down stairs, who, by the bye, muttered as she descended, that she would be a match for them all when they next came under her hands; that is, being interpreted, she would unsay all she had said that was in any degree favorable, and make their future hopes as dark and dreadful as an enraged Oracle could possibly paint them.

The next morning I was presented with another specimen of their superstitious propensities. It seems they were too much interested in the events of to-morrow to enjoy to-day, and I found, they were endeavoring to make out a favorite enigma of fortune, even after they were folded in the arms of sleep. No sooner, therefore, were they all assembled at breakfast, even before the tea was put into the pot, than the prognosticating Susan was again summoned.

She attended—and to what purpose dost thou think, my good reader? Even to the task of interpreting dreams. Every individual of the family had dreamed a dream; and Mrs. Susan knew the meaning of dreams as well, and could expound the visions of the night with as much truth and accuracy, as she could foretell the events of providence from criticising tea-cups, and from the mystic arrangements of a pack of cards. One lady imagined in her dream that she was stuck in the mud, and the more she attempted to extricate, the deeper she was involved in the mire; on her right hand was a poor bird caught on a lime-twig; on her left, a ship tossing in a tempest. The Interpreter observed, with great signs of gravity in her face, "that it was as bad a dream as ever was dreamed; that mud was misfortune, which would stick upon her heart; that her attempting to get away from it, and not being able, was a plain signification, that the more she strove, the worse she would be. She remarked, that the limed bird was an image of her distress; as the bird struggled, so would she struggle, and that it would be as easy for the one to get clear of the lime, as for the other to get rid of the trouble. The ship (she said) denoted a poor creature in distress, buffeting the billows of affliction; and altogether it was such a dream, as might frighten any reasonable christians out of their senses."

In this strain did our oracular priestess proceed to decypher the fates that had been sporting in the visions of others; and by the time she had ended her explanations, the whole family were made thereby as gloomy and desolate, as if they were actually laboring in all the agonies that were predicted; although the jade of a fortune-teller fairly confessed, within an hour afterwards, that she made things out as bad as she could, for their ill-usage of her the night before.

What, my good friend, shall we say to these gross and egregious absurdities? Shall we pity, or shall we despise? When people can so far lose their rational faculties as to shut their eyes against conviction, and imagine the ways of providence and of the Almighty are displayed in such insignificant things as painted paste-board, the fumes of indigestion, and the leaves of a tree tossed about a cup, what idea can they entertain of a Deity—of a Deity, who is so negligent as to lay open his secrets, and suffer them

to be seen in "trifles, light as air?"—Yes, when these trifles are made "confirmations strong as proofs of *holy writ*," it is impossible to help being sincerely affected at the folly and infirmity of mankind.

I am, dear sir, &c.

Industry the Cure for Poverty.

BEGGING being a trade, and a very beneficial one, no person who observes the astonishing increase of that profession in this quarter will hesitate to believe. And how can it be remedied? is the general question, to which no one gives an answer. Not easily by any measures of police certainly, but I will venture to suggest a cure in one word, and that a pretty effectual one—WORK-HOUSE!

"I remember to have heard of an old justice of the peace, who lived in a village in the vicinity of a large town, who, from his knowledge of the most invincible aversion of the begging tribe from regular labor of every kind, long contrived to have his forecourt and garden weeded gratis, by itinerant beggars. As he had a handsome house near the road, it naturally drew the attention of the mumping fraternity. On their application for charity, he constantly asked them the usual question, "Why don't you work?" To which the usual reply was always made, "So I would, God bless your worship, if I could get employment." On this music a while as if inclined by charity, he would set them to weed his court or garden, furnishing them with a hoe and wheel-barrow, and promising them a shilling when the job was completed. To work they would go with much seeming gratitude and alacrity. The justice stayed by them, or visited them from time to time until they had performed two-thirds of their task; he then retired to a private corner or place of espial, in order to prevent them from stealing his tools, and there waited for what constantly happened the moment he disappeared, which was the elopement of his workmen, who rather than complete the unfinished third of his work chose to give up what he had done.—This method with scarce one disappointment, the old justice long practised; until at length his fame having gone forth among the mendicant tribe, he was troubled with no more applications for charity. [Glasgow Journal.]

FOR THE HIVE.

DOCTORS AND DOCTOREES.

IT is the most easy, and at the same time the most difficult thing in nature, to be a physician:—Nothing is more easy certainly than to start up and call myself Doctor—to proclaim myself physician, surgeon, &c.—to look wise—to deceive the ignorant—to recount cures never performed—and to counterfeit diplomas, certificates, &c.

and there is nothing in nature so difficult to understand the state of the human system—to know the cause of disease, and to infallibly the remedy of the same disease.

The vis vitæ, animal life, muscular action, nervous influence, are subjects imperfectly understood by the shrewdest and most judicious philosophers.

The human body is too opaque for the keenest eye of genius to inspect, and the occultæ, opprobria medicorum, and je ne sais what shew that physic is less understood than any of the sciences.

There are two kinds of physicians, viz. mechanics and philosophers. The mechanic deals in specifics; he has a specific remedy for every disease, which he has learned by rote; he wants but the name of the disease to cure infallibly; he knows the vegetable in Nosology, and the very page in Sydenham or Buchan, where the disease and its specific are couched. The philosopher ministers no remedies unless he can explain the modus operandi.

Philosophers and fools may become doctors with equal facility. It is said doctors differ:—no wonder they differ: so long as philosophers and fools are doctors—so long as the faculty is composed of such heterogeneous bodies, doctors must differ.

Since fools can execute the office of guardians of our health, why waste the talents of the philosopher in an occupation which requires no abilities? Why fatigue genius by the drudgery of stupidity?

Why, the fool makes the best physician, he is always certain of success. Where the experienced physician, being so often disappointed in his remedies, has lost that confidence which ignorance inspires: but that knows nothing, fears nothing, and a fool is always confident. The skilful is doubtful and intimidates his patient; the ignorant, by his confidence, inspires a confidence which rescues the patient from death.

Is the illiterate before whose tribunal the doctor's character is tried; as if I were to decide the merit of an Indian orator or Chinese grammar. It is remarkable in how high estimation is the character of ignorance:—When sickness attacks; when pain torments; when life sinks; when death stares in the face; when eternity approaches, then the most ignorant being in existence is easily sought out and applied to for assistance. An Indian, or for want of an Indian, a Negro, or for want of a Negro, an old man is invoked. To the triumph of ignorance, to the scorn of science, the mechanic philosopher is shunned, and an old woman, the most ignorant thing in nature, is called to, entreated, expostulated, besought, to be safe, to pity, to help. If any thing can be found more irrational, silly, ignorant and stupid, than an old woman, it is still preferred. Does a dog lick a sore, and does the dog get well after it? then a dog's tongue

is an infallible remedy;—the dog as being more irrational than the old woman, is preferred therefore even to the witch. Does a dog eat grass for a sick stomach? then grass is a specific therefore. Medical knowledge what is it?—Is it not the child of instinct?—However, this we know, that it is something which is opposed to books, to schools, to science.

Mystery is an essential requisite of medicine;—a reasonable explanation of the ratio medendi, destroys its virtue, breaks the charm, and renders it useless. An unintelligible reason indeed may pass with impunity; but an explicit, rational explanation, damns the best medicine;—there must be a quid ignotum in medicine, or it is useless.

How vain is learning, when the Guinea Negro excels the most enlightened literati, in the most abstruse of sciences? How pernicious is education, when an old *she*, who cannot spell two syllables, can rectify the mistakes of the most learned doctors.

"Accurs'd the man whom fate ordains in spite,
And cruel parents teach to read and write;—
What need for letters? wherefore should we spell?
Why write our names? a mark will do as well."

MOHAWK.

Lancaster, April 11, 1804.

MARRIED, on Thursday evening last, by the Rev. Mr. Reinick, Mr. Jacob Demuth, to Miss Elizabeth Eberman, all of this borough.

—, on the 24th ult. by the Rev. Mr. Patterson, Mr. Thomas Atkinson, printer, to the agreeable Miss Sally Sommera, daughter of Mr. Leonard Sommers, all of Harrisburg.

—, a few weeks since, by the Rev. Mr. Johnston, Samuel Fisher, Esq. Post-master at Alexandria, to Miss Polly Lyons, of the same place.

DIED, on Friday last, in the 62d year of her age, Mrs. Rachel Jordan, consort of Mr. John Jordan, of this borough; and, on the Sunday following, her remains were deposited in the burial-place of the English Episcopal church, attended by a numerous train of weeping friends.

If discharging the relative duties of an affectionate wife, a tender mother, and a pious christian, is to be considered a virtue, and entitled to a future reward, Mrs. Jordan, may be esteemed happy in quitting this vale of tears; as she possessed and practised those amiable virtues, in an eminent degree. [Intelligencer.]

A WHALE, said to be forty feet in length, having found, or rather lost, its way up the river Delaware, opposite to Philadelphia, has been killed and got above the water at Kensington bridge, where it is to be seen. It is said to be the greatest curiosity ever

witnessed at Philadelphia.—Should Mr. Peale place this Leviathan by the Mammoth in his Museum, he might exhibit a PAIR of Spectacles!

We are told that the unfortunate and mysterious Miss M'DOWELL, whose misfortune has excited so much public solicitude, is now in Philadelphia, under the protection of several worthy members of the society of Friends.

A few weeks since, a man named Wilkinson, shot himself at Stubenville, in the state of Ohio. What renders this remarkable is, that he was married on Thursday evening, and on Friday morning he perpetrated the horrid act, in the presence of his wife.

MAMMOTH COWS.

A Cow, raised by Mr. Nathaniel Sawyer, of Wilton, was last week killed in this town, weighing 1029 lbs. She had 121 lbs. of tallow, exclusive of the tallow on the quarters.

Two years since, a cow, raised by Dr. Rockwood, in the same town, was killed in this place, which weighed 1025 lbs.

[Amherst fast.]

SLAVERY.

"Dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him."

Every heart, which is formed to weep at another's woe, must be shocked on the perusal of an advertisement like the following, lately published in a Charlestown (S. C.) paper, and signed by Tindo & Coxe, to their everlasting disgrace, as well as that of the State, which allows the barbarous traffic.

"SALE OF AFRICANS.

"THE sale of the cargo of the ship Governor Dowdeswell, E. Williams, master, consisting of three hundred and twenty-nine slaves, from Africa, will commence this day, the 20th instant, at eleven o'clock, on board of the said ship, at Champney's wharf."

The celebrated Doctor Thomas Scott, in one of his essays, says, "whatever by force or stratagem deprives another of his life is prohibited; all the slaughter committed by oppressions, persecutions, attempts to reduce to, or confine in slavery our unoffending fellow creatures, on any pretence whatever, is wilful murder. What then shall we think of this accursed slave trade; which will surely bring vengeance on this land if much longer tolerated? Even laws needlessly sanguinary (as I fear many are in this land) involve the persons concerned in this enormous guilt, and they who should punish the murderer, and yet suffer him to escape, will be numbered among the abettors of his crime at God's tribunal." [ib.]

POETRY.

[The ease and tenderness of the following lines will recommend them to every person of taste and reflection.] — *E. Post.*

EARLY LIFE.

WHEN young in life, nor known to sorrow,
How lightly flew the gladsome day!
Gay dreams of bliss brought on the morrow,
And gilt the sun's declining ray.

Then, sweet and tranquil were my slumbers—
Then, never "wak'd mine eyes to weep,"
No sorrow which the heart encumbers,
Poison'd the balm of downy sleep.

No treach'rous friendship then had found me,
Nor death's dread power had rent my heart—
Hope spread her fair illusions round me,
And play'd the dear deceiver's part.

She pictur'd years of tranquil pleasure,
Peace and content she held to view;
My trusting heart dwelt o'er its treasure,
And thought the lovely vision true.

Ah! scenes of joy, by fancy given,
To cheat th' enraptur'd gazing eye!
Say why, alas! ye promise heaven,
And give—but disappointment's sigh!

Dear days of bliss! ye wake my sorrow—
Now, slowly moves the tedious day,
While sombre shades o'ercloud the morrow,
And shroud the sun's declining ray. CLARA.

THE RUINS.

I'VE seen in twilight's pensive hour,
The moss-clad dome, the mould'ring tow'r,
In awful ruin stand:
The dome where grateful voices sung,
That tower whose chiming music rang,
Majestically grand!

I've seen, 'mid sculptur'd pride, the tomb,
Where heroes slept, in silent gloom,
Unconscious of their fame:
Those who, with laurel'd honor crown'd,
Among their foes spread terrors round,
— And gain'd—an empty name!

I've seen in death's dark palace laid,
The ruins of a beauteous maid,
Cadaverous and pale!
That maiden, who, while life remain'd,
O'er rival charms in triumph reign'd,
The mistress of the vale.

I've seen, where dungeon damps abide,
A youth, admir'd in manhood's pride,
In fancied greatness rave:
He, who, in REASON's happier day,
Was virtuous, witty, noble, gay,
Learn'd, generous, and brave.

Nor dome, nor tow'r, in twilight shade,
Nor hero fall'n, nor beauteous maid,
To ruin all consign'd:
Can with such pathos touch my breast,
As (on the maniac's form imprest)
The "ruins of a noble mind."

ODE TO POPULARITY.

O POPULARITY, thou giddy thing!
What grace or profit dost thou bring?
Thou art not honest, thou art not fame;
I cannot call thee by a worthy name.
To say I hate thee were not true;
Contempt is properly thy due;
I cannot love thee and despise thee too.
Thou art no patriot, but the veriest cheat
That ever traffick'd in deceit;
A state empiric, bellowing loud
Freedom and phrenzy to the mobbing crowd;
And what car'st thou, if thou can'st raise
Illuminations and huzzas

Though half the city sunk in one bright blaze!

A patriot! no; for thou dost hold in hate
The very peace and welfare of the state;
When anarchy assaults the Sovereign's throne,
Then is thy day, the night thy own;
Then is thy triumph, when the foe
Levels some dark insidious blow,
Or strong rebellion lays thy country low.

Thou can'st affect humility, to hide
Some deep device of monstrous pride;
Conscience and charity pretend,
For compassing some private end;
And in a canting conventicle note
Long scripture passages can'st quote
When persecution rankles in thy throat.

Thou hast no sense of nature at thy heart,
No ear for science, and no eye for art,
Yet confidently dost thou decide at once
This man a wit, and that a dunce;
And (strange to tell) howe'er unjust,
We take thy dictates upon trust,

For if the world will be deceiv'd, it must.

In truth and justice thou hast no delight,
Virtue thou dost not know by sight;
But, as the chymist by his skill,
From dross and dregs a spirit can distill,
So from the prisons, or the stews,
Bullies, blasphemers, cheats, or Jews
Shall turn to heroes, if they serve thy views.

Thou dost but make a ladder of the mob,
Whereby to climb into some courtly job;
There safe reposing, warm and snug,
Thou answer'st with a patient shrug,
Miscreants, begone; who cares for you,
Ye base-born, brawling, clamorous crew!
You've serv'd my turn, and, vagabonds, adieu.

H U M O R I S T.

THE oath used among the Scotch Highlanders, in judicial proceedings contains most solemn denunciation of vengeance, case of perjury, and involves the wife, children, the arable and meadow land of party who takes it, all together in an act of destruction. When it is administered there is no book to be kissed, but the hand is held up while the oath is repeated—To prove the superior idea of sanctity which this imprecation conveys to those who have been accustomed to it, it may be said to relate of a Highlander, who at Carlisle assizes, had sworn positively in English mode to a fact of consequence, indifference during that solemnity, had been observed by the opposite party, he required to confirm his testimony by taking the oath of his own country to the same. "No, no," said the mountaineer, in northern dialect; "ken ye not ther is a little o' diffarance, 'twixt blaing on a buke, domming ones ain saul?"

WHEN a lawyer on his passage to rope, was one day walking the deck, it being blown a pretty hard gale the preceding day, a shark was playing by the ship. Having never seen such an object before, he called to one of the sailors to tell him what it was. "Why," replied the tar, "I don't know what name they know 'em by ashore, but here we call 'em SEA LAWYERS."

AN intoxicated subaltern met his general who was going round the encampment, laying hold of the bridle of his horse, and paying him the price of his horse. The general perceiving his condition, had him taken to a house and put to bed. Next morning the general asked him how much he would give for the horse. Our sobered subaltern replied, "Sir, the merchant who yesterday was disposed to purchase your horse, was off early this morning."

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